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LEWIS CARROLL IN MAGIC LANTERN LAND

By Leora Wood Wells

> She looked up, and there was the Cat again, sitting on the branch of a tree... "I wish you wouldn't keep appearing and vanishing so suddenly. You make one quite giddy."
>
> "All right," said the Cat, and this time it vanished quite slowly, beginning with the end of the tail, and ending with the grin, which remained some time after the rest of it had gone.
>
> "Well, I've seen a cat without a grin," thought Alice, "but a grin without a cat! It's the most curious thing I ever saw in my life."

What magic lantern devotee, reading this passage from Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland, would not think of a slip slide or a dissolving view? Or what about the Duchess' baby turning into a pig? The White Queen in Through the Looking Glass becoming a sheep whose knitting needles transmogrify into boat oars? Or what about Alice herself, changing from normal size to nine feet tall and then a mere three inches? Do they not all suggest the "magical" effects of a skillfully projected lantern show?

Few writers have had such a gift for imagery as Lewis Carroll, and it is tempting to assume that his frequent use of dissolving techniques carried over into his writing from personal experience with magic lanterns.

But did it? This turns out to be the question of which came first, the chicken or the egg. That Lewis Carroll used and enjoyed magic lanterns is amply documented, but whether he wrote as he did because of them or whether he enjoyed them because they produced a result so closely akin to the way he thought and wrote is an unanswerable question.

Lewis Carroll, whose real name was Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832-1898) was born in Cheshire, England. The son and grandson of clergymen, he was himself ordained a deacon in 1861, but never moved fully into clerical life -- partly because he could not reconcile this calling with his fascination with theatricals. As a boy, he had created a marionette theater for his siblings, and throughout his life, theater-going was one of his principal pleasures.

A shy young man with a stammer, he entered Christ Church College at Oxford at 19 and remained there the rest of his life, moving from student status to lecturer in mathematics, but never feeling completely at home as a don. From all accounts, his lectures were boring, both to his students and to him.

It was not always so. He started his teaching career with high hopes. In January 1856, after meeting for the first time with a class of boys he had agreed to teach at St. Aldate's School in Oxford, he noted in his diary that he had found the experience "much more pleasant than I expected." The boys, however, were boisterous and high spirited, and it occurred to the novice teacher that to hold their interest, "it would be a very good idea to have the slides of a magic lantern painted." Whether he carried through this idea or not, this teaching venture lasted exactly one month. By February 26, he found the class "noisy and inattentive" and the whole notion of teaching young boys "disheartening." Three days later he left word at the school that he would not come again.

Years later, in the 1870's, this experience was reflected in a satiric paper Dodgson wrote called "Notes of an Oxford Chiel." In a list of imaginary requirements for a Mathematical School, he included "a magic room, which might be darkened, and fitted up with a magic lantern, for the purpose of exhibiting Circular Decimals in the act of circulation."

After this first teaching fiasco, Dodgson devoted himself to his work as Sub-Librarian and Lecturer to college-age students at Christ Church College -- both of which he found, if not particularly stimulating, at least less taxing than coping with young boys. But his real interests lay elsewhere. However unpleasant he found young boys to be, he found little girls enchanting, and it was as a result of a meeting with one of them on April 25, 1856, that the shy young don, Charles Dodgson evolved -- or should we say dissolved? -- into the supreme storyteller, Lewis Carroll. The child he met was Alice Pleasance Liddell, one of several daughters of the Dean of Christ Church. She was not quite four at the time, but already a charmer, and Dodgson spent many happy hours over the next several years in company with her and her sisters.

Their chief enjoyment lay in the wonderful stories he told them, inventing as he went along. Because Alice was his favorite, he made her the central character in the remarkable adventures he described. After a particularly enjoyable day on the river in July, 1862, Alice begged him to "write out Alice's adventures" for her, and he sat up all night trying to get it all down on paper. When Christmas came, he gave her a carefully bound manuscript of the story, complete with his own illustrations.

By 1865, word of the wonderful book had spread, and Dodgson was urged to publish it. He did, but thinking the fantasy unsuitable to the dignity of an Oxford don, he used the nom de plume by which he became known all over the world.

But this gets ahead of our story of Dodgson's interest in magic lanterns. When he first became acquainted with them is not clear, but it was probably fairly early in his boyhood. He loved mechanical toys of all sorts, and his rooms at Oxford contained an impressive collection of them with which he amused the growing numbers of his young friends. Photography -- still a new art -- was another of his interests, and he bought himself a camera in March, 1856. On December 20 of the same year he recorded another important purchase: "Sent to Watkin and Hill, Charing Cross, to arrange to buy a magic lantern."

He wasted no time putting it to use. On New Year's Eve, while visiting his family's home for the holidays, he noted, "First exhibition of the Magic Lantern: the largest audience I ever had, about eighty children, and a large miscellaneous party besides of friends, servants, etc." Apparently the show was a great success, because he gave another show the following night and found it not nearly "so trying to the voice" as he had expected. On another occasion, he made the Great Hall of Christ Church ring with laughter as he presented a magic lantern show for the children of Oxford.

Dodgson was as interested in seeing magic lantern shows as he was in giving them. On January 22, 1857, he and his Uncle Skeffington made quite a day of it in London. They visited the Photographic Gallery

and the Polytechnic to see new photographic exhibits, took in a magic lantern show, and topped it off with a visit to the Princess's Theatre to see "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and a pantomime performance of "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp." Of the magic lantern show, a history of Blue Beard, he wrote, "the pictures (were) good, the accompanying lecture rather dull." Three years later, he wrote his sister Mary a detailed description of "a series of dissolving views of the Arctic" he had just seen.

One experience which seems to have had particular influence on Dodgson's interest in special effects achieved through use of the magic lantern was a visit he paid to the Princess's Theatre in London on June 22, 1855 to see Shakespeare's "Henry VIII." It was, he wrote in his diary, "the greatest theatrical treat I ever had or ever expect to have." He thought Charles Kean magnificent as Cardinal Wolsey and Ellen Tree (Mrs. Kean) superb as Henry's tragic queen, Catherine of Aragon, who accepted her divorce from Henry with such dignity and resignation.

> But oh, that exquisite vision of Queen Catherine! I almost held my breath to watch; the illusion is perfect...sunbeams broke through the roof and gradually revealed two angel forms, floating in front of the carved work in the ceiling: the column of sunbeams shone down upon the sleeping queen, and gradually down it floated a troop of angelic forms, transparent, and carrying palm branches in their hands: they waved these over the sleeping queen, with oh! such a sad and solemn grace...She in an ecstasy raises her arms toward them, and to sweet slow music they vanish as marvelously as they came.

Dodgson was, in fact, so entranced by this performance that he took a party of relatives to see it on June 26. "Parts of the play I enjoyed even more than the last time," he wrote, "the Vision especially." From then on, he tended to measure other stage illusions by the yardstick of this one. A year later, when he returned to the same theater to see "A Winter's Tale," he recorded that "The visions were gorgeous, but did not please me nearly as much as Queen Catherine's dream." Oddly enough, he does not seem to have recorded how these illusions were achieved, although his mechanical bent would surely have made him investigate this question.

During this period, Dodgson's contacts with uses of the magic lantern were many and varied. The children of another Oxford don, George Macdonald, were among Dodgson's many close child friends, and years later, one of them wrote nostalgically of outings with him during the 1860's -- going down in a diving bell, visiting toy shops and panoramas, and, as a special annual treat, going to the Polytechnic "for the entrancing 'dissolving views' of fairy tales." By 1876, the Alice story itself, represented through the superb illustrations of John Tenniel, was presented in dissolving views at the Polytechnic.

Although Dodgson's principal fame now rests on the two Alice books, photography was his consuming passion over a twenty-five year period from 1855 until 1880, and he was one of the best amateur portrait photographers of that era. His favorite subjects were his many little girl friends, and he noted sadly that at the age of thirteen or so, they suddenly changed, "and hardly for the better," and he lost interest in them. Indeed, the central theme of Alice in Wonderland is change. Nothing is stable, nothing remains the same -- even Alice herself.

Was Dodgson's urge to capture the innocent, fleeting beauty of childhood in photographs his way of conferring a sort of childhood immortality on them? He could not stop the passage of time, but through photographs, he could, at least, try to keep his little friends from disappearing altogether like the shy, funny little ghost who is the central character of Phantasmagoria, his 1869 book of humorous verses.

He describes the changing image of the ghost:

> And still he seemed to grow more white,
> More vapoury, and wavier--
> Seen in the dim and flickering light,
> As he proceeded to recite
> His Maxims of Behaviour.

Finally, having delivered all his maxims, the little ghost discovers to his great "dyscomfyture" that he has been talking the entire time to the wrong man. But, reconciled to this fact, he admits it was his error, and he brings the whole interview to an abrupt but comradely close:

> But gracious me! It's getting light!
> Goodnight, old Turnip-top, goodnight!

He gives a nod and disappears, as all good phantasmagoric ghosts must do. He had been a fleeting image, captured for only a moment of time.

In his dedication to Through the Looking Glass, published in 1872, when Alice was nineteen, Carroll again picked up the theme of the fleeting nature of human relationships.

> I have not seen thy sunny face,
> Nor heard thy silver laughter;
> No thought of me shall find a place
> In thy young life's hereafter--
> Enough that now thou will not fail
> To listen to my fairy-tale.

There was no going back. Alice -- the beloved Alice-child of his stories -- had vanished from his life almost as completely as the little phantasmagoric ghost -- or one of the dissolving slides in his magic lantern shows.

QUEEN CATHERINE'S VISION

By Leora Wood Wells

What, precisely, did Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) see on those June nights in 1855 when he was so enchanted with Queen Catherine's vision in the Kean production of "Henry VIII" that he went to see it twice within four days? At first thought, there would seem to be three possibilities.

First, the "angels" might have been living actors let down on wires as is done in stage productions of "Peter Pan." This theory might seem to be supported by Dodgson's comment about a performance of "The Tempest" that he saw on July 3, 1857.

> The scenic effects in "The Tempest" certainly surpass anything I ever saw there or elsewhere. The most marvelous was the shipwreck in the first scene, where (to all appearances), a real ship is heaving about on huge waves, and is finally wrecked under a cliff that reaches up to the roof. The machinery that works this must be something wonderful...but the gem of the piece was the exquisitely graceful and beautiful Ariel, Miss Kate Terry. Her appearance as a sea-nymph was one of the most beautiful living pictures I ever saw, but this, and every other one in my recollection (except Queen Catherine's dream) were all outdone by the concluding scene, where Ariel is left alone, hovering over the wide ocean, watching the retreating ship.

"Living pictures?" But wait! The figures in Queen Catherine's vision could not have been living actors on wires, for Dodgson has told us that the "troop of angelic forms" was transparent.

This brings us to the second possibility: that the Pepper's Ghost technique was used to project ethereal images of hidden, living actors onto the stage. This could account for Dodgson's comment that the angels waved palm branches over the sleeping queen "with oh! such sad and solemn grace."

The Pepper's Ghost effect was so called after Professor John Henry Pepper, who popularized its use at the Royal Polytechnic Institution in London. A large sheet of high quality glass was supported at an angle between the audience and the actors on stage. A technician under the stage used a magic lantern (without slides) to throw a powerful light upon an actor or actors in a pit located in front of, but below the level of the stage. These actors were hidden from the view of the audience by a heavy screen. The brilliant light caused these images to be reflected up onto the glass partition, but the catroptic effect of this reflection was such that the images appeared to the spectators to be as far behind the glass (invisible to them) as the hidden, living actors were in front of it. By moving about in their pit, the "ghostly" actors could, therefore, appear to engage in close contact with the actors on the stage. (See illustration.)

Harper's New Monthly Magazine, vol. 55, June-November 1877, describes some of the effects thus achieved:

> Two persons are, or are supposed to be, walking about the stage. They rush from side to side; they gesticulate; they are heard to speak to each other; the dramatic movement they go through is actually blood-curdling. For one is a creature like ourselves, of flesh and blood, and the other is a phantom, an impalpable spectre. The living being

> vainly tries to seize the phantom. He thrusts his sword through and through it; he even himself passes through it as the sunshine penetrates a rain cloud. In spite of this the spectre does not lose its human shape. It remains seemingly quite intact; it continues to gesticulate, and appears to haughtily defy its mortal assailant. Finally it vanishes, and the living man, with sweating brow and horror-stricken features, remains alone upon the stage.

This description would seem to make a Pepper's Ghost effect a feasible explanation of Dodgson's report of transparent figures capable of waving their arms about. But another problem arises. In 1855, the year that Dodgson saw the memorable performance of "Henry VIII," the Illustrated London News carried an illustration of the Vision scene as presented in the Kean production. (See illustration in previous article.) This shows the "troop of angelic forms" descending on the sunbeam in a variety of postures, some of which would be difficult for living actors to maintain without losing their balance if they were teetering -- as they would have to be in a Pepper's Ghost illusion --- on a set of steps in the hidden pit.

So this brings us to the third possibility: a phantasmagoria effect. The classic description of the phantasmagoria comes from Sir David Brewster's Letters on Natural Magic, written to Sir Walter Scott in 1832. He was describing an exhibition given by M. Philipstal in London and Edinburgh in 1802.

> The power of the magic lantern has been greatly extended by placing it on one side of the transparent screen of taffetas, which receives the images, while the spectators are placed on the other side, and by making every part of the glass slides opaque, excepting the part which forms the figures. Hence all the figures appear luminous on a black ground... (In Philipstal's exhibition) the small theatre of exhibition was lighted only by one hanging lamp, the flame of which was drawn up into an opaque chimney or shade when the performance began. In this "darkness visible," the curtain rose and displayed a cave with skeletons and other terrific figures in relief upon its walls. The flickering light was then drawn up beneath its shroud, and the spectators, in total carkness, found themselves in the middle of thunder and lightning. A thin transparent screen had, unknown to the spectators, been let down after the disappearance of the light, and upon it the flashes of lightning and all the subsequent appearances were represented... The thunder and lightning were followed by

> the figures of ghosts, skeletons and known individuals, whose eyes and mouths were made to move by the shifting of combined sliders.
>
> After the first figure had been exhibited for a short time, it began to grow less and less, as if removed to a great distance, and at last vanished in a small cloud of light... (This) was followed by spectres, skeletons, and terrific figures, which, instead of receding and vanishing as before, suddenly advanced upon the spectators, becoming larger as they approached them, and finally vanished by appearing to sink into the ground... The spectators were not only surprised but agitated, and many of them were of the opinion that they could have touched the figures.

All of these effects, Brewster explained, were produced by varying the distance of the magic lantern from the screen, at the same time keeping the image distinct by adjusting the focusing unit.

One of Philipstal's best known predecessors in use of this technique was a Belgian professor of physics, Etiénne Gaspard Roberts -- better known as Robertson, the name he preferred to use. His terrifying phantasmagoria shows, often presented in the skull-lined chapel of an abandoned Capuchin monastery in Paris, reached their peak of popularity in the late 18th century, just after the French Revolution. (See illustration.)

Now where does Brewster's description of the phantasmagoria leave us in relation to Queen Catherine's vision? The phantasmagoria would have made it easy for the projected angel images to appear to float in the air. Also, we know that it would have been possible for them to "wave palm branches" (although the London News illustration suggests that they carried laurel wreathes). But Brewster reminds us that projected images can, indeed, appear to move anatomical parts: their eyes and mouths, he says, "were made to move by the shifting of combined sliders." If eyes and mouths can move, obviously, so can arms. It is equally possible that Dodgson, swept up in the emotional impact of the scene, mistook the forward movement of the angel forms toward the sleeping queen for articulated gestures.

Whether the queen's vision was a Pepper's Ghost or a phantasmagoria illusion, it is distinctly reminiscent of the scenes in which Alice grows larger and larger and then so small she almost vanishes. The whole effect, as Alice herself put it, was "Curiouser and curiouser," and it had the touch of mystery and absurdity that held such great appeal for Dodgson-Carroll as he shaped his stories -- and his life.

FRANK NORRIS, McTEAGUE, AND THE VITASCOPE

By Robert H. Woodward

Itself the inspiration for a classic motion picture, Greed, directed by Erich von Stroheim in 1924, Frank Norris' naturalistic novel McTeague: A Story of San Francisco (1899) contains what may well be the first reference in American fiction to commercial motion pictures.

A hulking, backward, self-taught dentist in San Francisco, McTeague is capitavated by the young cousin of a friend of his and invites the young woman, Trina Sieppe, her German-Swiss mother, and her little brother to an evening at "the theatre," actually a vaudeville performance. The evening is described in realistic detail in Chapter 6. The "programme" for the evening's entertainment lists the performances--a musical farce, a pair of sisters who are "serio-comiques and skirt dancers," acrobats, lightning artists, ventriloquists, and, last of all, "The feature of the evening, the crowning scientific achievement of the nineteenth century, the kinetoscope."

"The kinetoscope," Norris writes, "fairly took their breaths away."

> "What will they do next?" observed Trina, in amazement. "Ain't that wonderful, Mac?"
>
> McTeague was awe-struck.
>
> "Look at that horse move his head," he cried excitedly, quite carried away. "Look at that cable car coming -- and the man going across the street. See, here comes a truck. Well, I never in all my life! What would Marcus say to this?"

"It's all a drick!" exclaimed Mrs. Sieppe, with sudden conviction. "I ain't no fool; dot's nothun but a drick."

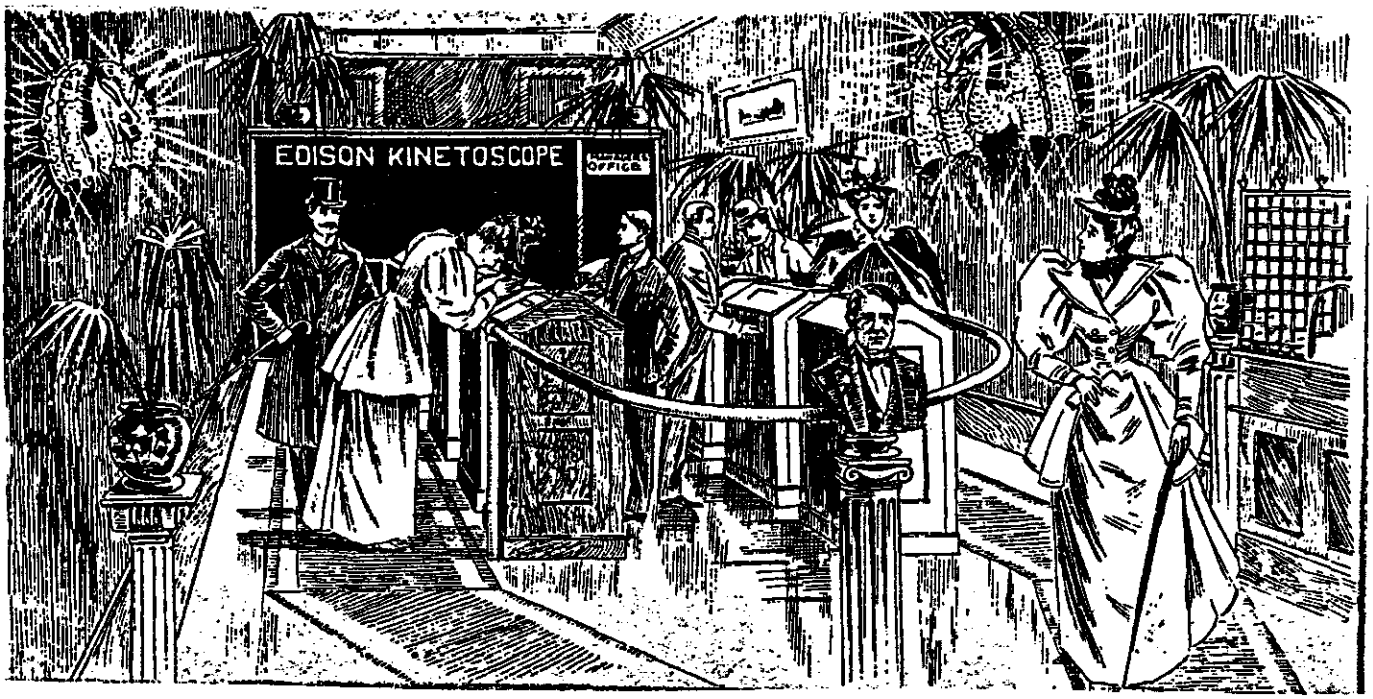
"Well, of course, mamma," exclaimed Trina, "it's--"

But Mrs. Sieppe put her head in the air.

"I'm too old to be fooled," she persisted. "It's a drick." Nothing more could be got out of her than this.

The party stayed to the very end of the show, though the kinetoscope was the last number but one on the programme, and fully half the audience left immediately afterward.

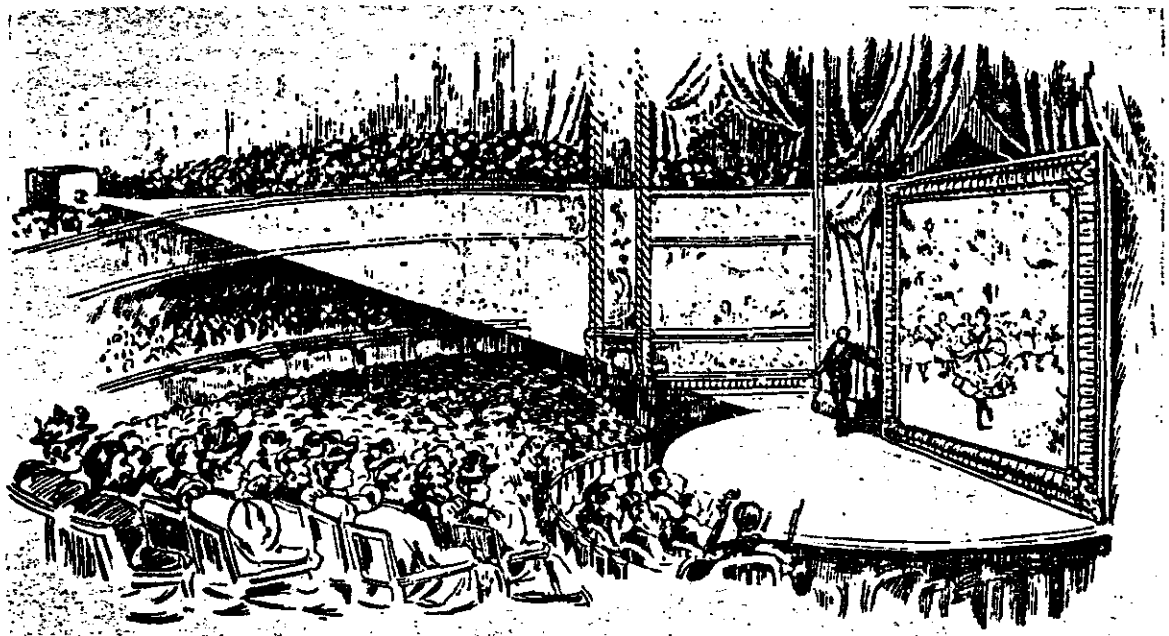
Although he is known for his use of realistic details, Norris errs in referring to the new marvel as a kinetoscope, which was actually a peep-hole, nickel-in-the-slot machine introduced commercially by Edison in 1894. Norris, intimately familiar with San Francisco, was surely acquainted with the kinetoscope, for five of the machines were installed that year in a San Francisco parlor operated by Peter Gacigalupi at 644 Market Street (see Gordon Hendricks, The Kinetoscope, 1966, pp. 59-60).



What he was describing was the Vitascope, a projector introduced by Thomas Armat, of Washington, in 1895. It all but put the Kinetoscope out of business by the end of the century (Hendricks, p. 143).

Norris' error is corroborated by Don Graham in his book, The Fiction of Frank Norris (1978). Graham has located "programmes" of the Orpheum, San Francisco's Great Music Hall, which served Norris as a model for McTeague's night out. A performance in June 1896, Graham notes (p. 49), has as its highlight "Edison's Latest Marvel: The Vitascope: The Photo-Electric Sensation of the Day." In the programme of the Orpheum, Edison's well-known name was obviously a better drawing-card than Armat's.

Despite Norris' failure to remember what the projector was called, however, his portrayal of the scene is surely accurate in capturing the amazement of unsophisticated audiences, accustomed to the static pictures of magic lanterns, in seeing actual motion on the screen. And, of course, Mrs. Sieppe was right. It was nothing but "a drick." But McTeague was hardly the one to explain persistence of vision to her. He would not have known; and, then, he was awe-struck, too.



The Vitascope being Exhibited in a Theatre or Public Hall.

COMPARISONS
By Nellie C. Savicki

Magic Lantern Memories

Swiftly the yesteryears:
Walking on stilts,
Flying from barn rafters
Into mounds of hay.
Hiking a mile or more to school,
Fetching cows home,
Gathering scrub oak,
Exploring, picking wild strawberries,
Rowing a bota,
Pitching a tent, quiet retreat,
Hitching 'Dolly' to the carriage.
Starched pinafores,
MAGIC LANTERN memories.

Space Age

Jet skis, jetliners,
Speed skates, snowmobiles,
Drag boats, hydros,
Sunday sports, Rock Stars,
RV's, Nuclear Power,
Data Processing, computers,
Stereophonics, video, cassettes,
Pizzas, super burgers, snack foods,
Consolidated schools,
Compacts, convertibles, motorcycles,
Space flights, satellites,
Blue jeans,
Remote control TV, Drive-In movies.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Joe Koch tells us that these "comparative poems" by Nellie Savicki grew out of thoughts generated by a magic lantern show Joe and Alice put on at Nellie's church. It was the first such show she had seen, and it triggered nostalgic memories, as well as contrasting perceptions of today's Passing Show. (See ML Bulletin April 1981 and July 1981 for articles on the use of magic lantern terms to convey a series of quick impressions.)

BOOKS OLD AND NEW

Barnes Museum of Cinematography, Catalogue of the Collection, Part 2, Optical Projection, by John Barnes, Barnes Museum, St. Ives, Cornwall, England, 1970. During our visit to the Barnes Museum last August (see ML Bulletin October 1981), John generously presented us with one of his last remaining copies of this catalogue of his and his brother's collection. It bears the inscription "To the Magic Lantern Society of

the United States and Canada with the Author's Compliments."

This 70-page paperback book is the second in a projected series of six which together will constitute a comprehensive catalogue of the Barnes collection. Unillustrated, it consists of chapters on The Origins of the Magic Lantern, The Invention of the Magic Lantern, The Magic Lantern in the 18th Century, Magic Lantern Shows, The Magic Lantern Depicted in English Caricature Prints, Magic Lanterns-- 19th Century, and Illuminants. Each of these brief chapters is followed by a description of articles in the Barnes collection which relate to the chapter's topic -- lanterns, illuminating devices, portraits of key people, prints, cartoons and caricatures, etc. The Supplement to Part II (which I have not seen) deals with magic lantern slides and readings, slide carriers and accessories, and juvenile lanterns. The richness of information provided by this slender volume is astonishing. It introduces all of the major developers of the lantern, identifies the precise contributions of each and unscrambles the historical chronology. It also provides clear explanations of the significance of various structural changes and illumination systems.

Not all volumes in this composite catalogue have yet been published. It is a labor of love and a life-work project -- and certainly a major contribution to the literature of the magic lantern. You will recall from the July 1979 issue of the ML Bulletin that John is also the author of The Beginnings of the Cinema in England, distributed in this country in 1976 by Barnes & Noble Import Division of Harper and Row.

Scientific Trade Cards in the Science Museum Collection, by H.R. Calvert, 1971, L 1.90. Obtainable from the Science Museum Bookstall or Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 49 High Holburn, London WC 1 V 6HB, England.

If you like treasure hunts and don't mind a bit of eye strain, you'll love this book of plates of 17ty, 18th and 19th century trade cards. At least 15 of the advertisements specifically mention "magick lanthorns" in the text, and another seven or so include m.l. illustrations. In addition, there are endless numbers of ads for makers of unspecified "optical, mathematical and philosophical instruments." There are many tantalizing clues such as a reference to one "Bestall" who was a "painter of diagrams for the magic lantern" in the 1870's and a program for "a magic lantern entertainment" given in 1865 at no lesser place than Windsor Castle. The quality of reproduction of the plates is excellent in this well-bound paperback book.

Stoddard's Lectures. After our mention of lantern lecturer John Stoddard appeared in the April 1980 Bulletin, some of you expressed interest in obtaining sets of Stoddard's books. These contain his lectures and are illustrated by photographs of the slides he used. Bob Woodward reminds us of Scott Fitzgerald's reference to these books in The Great Gatsby, where they rest in pristine glory on Gatsby's shelves -- his symbol of "culture," enhanced, apparently, in his mind by the fact that the pages remain uncut.

This is a perceptive comment on the cultural symbols of the period because Stoddard's Lectures were widely found in those days in the homes

of middle and upper class families but are, in truth, dull enough that they remained largely unread. It was the excitement of the projected images and Stoddard's dynamic platform manner that made them so popular -- just as the television series and charisma of Alistair Cooke, Kenneth Clark and Carl Sagan have catapulted the sale of their books -- even though they, too, tend to rest in unread splendor on today's coffee tables.

Still, those of you interested in the travelogue type of slides or the social history of the lantern may well want to get hold of a set of Stoddard's books. In October, 1981, we saw a 10 volume set at Bedford's Books, Ellsworth, Maine, for $17.50. Bookseller Irene Rouse, located at 905 Duke Street, Alexandria, Virginia, has two sets in beautiful condition at $50 apiece. This seems a bit steep to us, since we paid 25¢ per volume for the set we picked up years ago, but it is, after all, not out of line with the prices of most books today.

MAGAZINE AND JOURNAL ARTICLES

Schlosser Article. In the last Bulletin we neglected to mention that Henry Schlosser kindly supplied copies of his article "Magic Lantern Slides -- A Legitimate Art Form" (Spinning Wheel, Jan.-Feb. 1980) for distribution to attendees at the National Convention. He has also offered to mail copies to interested members who write him at P.O. Box 22, Strasburg, Pa. 17579. He didn't ask for it, but I'm sure a stamped, self-addressed, business size envelope would be appreciated.

Kircher Article. Steve Chamberlain has sent us the October, 1981 issue of SMPTE JOURNAL, publication of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (vol. 90, #10). This contains a well-documented, illustrated, seven-page article by H. Mark Gosser entitled "Kircher and the Lanterna Magica -- A Reexamination," which covers the origins, definition and precursors of the lantern and the work of Kircher, Schott, Huygens, Walgensten and others. It also has a 45 item bibliography. This article was first presented as a paper at the Symposium on the Life and Work of Athanasius Kircher, held Oct. 29-30, 1980, in West Germany. The author is a layout designer for TV Guide. His investigations have led him to conclude that other inventors preceded Kircher in development of the magic lantern, and that Huygens appears to have been the first to develop a true projecting lantern using glass slides. This article has by far the best explanations I have seen of Kircher's confusing illustrations and text and what they actually demonstrated. Kircher's greatest contribution, as Gosser sees it, was as a catalyst whose first edition of Ars Magna Lucis et Umbrae (1644) sparked experimentation by many researchers. Just how much experimentation Kircher himself did during the interval between the first and the 1671 editions, Gosser says, can only be known when more of Kircher's vast correspondence becomes available.

NOTE: I have no idea whether reprints of this article are available, and copyright laws prevent my sending you xeroxes, so please don't ask. The SMPTE JOURNAL is published at 862 Scarsdale Avenue, Scarsdale, NY 10583. Single issues cost $5.

David Brewster. The Dec. 17, 1981 issue of the British weekly NEW SCIENTIST (vol. 92, #1284) has an article by William Cochran, FRS, entitled "Who Remembers David Brewster?" The answer, of course, is any of us who are interested in kaleidoscopes and stereoscopes as well as magic lanterns, or who cherish his superb description of a phantasmagoria show in his Letters on Natural Magic (1837). Brewster received great recognition as a physicist during his lifetime. Cochran, a professor of natural philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, believes his work was over-rated by his contemporaries and that despite his significant contributions to the theory of optics, his greatest contribution was as a popularizer of science.

By the way, Jim Flanagan found Brewster's Letters so fascinating that he has urged a New York publisher to bring out a reprint. He has also reminded us that the rear projection technique described by Brewster is still used by Doug and Anita Lear in their magic lantern shows aboard their narrowboat on the Thames River.

KOCH'S KORNER: THE CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Anniversary. Our Society has just celebrated its fourth birthday. Hard to realize we've been operating that long, isn't it? We've had a few problems, but I think all of us have also had a lot of fun sharing our hobby with each other. Alice and I went out to dinner to celebrate -- and we wished all of you could have been with us.

Membership. There's good news and bad. We now have almost 70 members, and many are becoming increasingly active in the Society. But -- the Membership Year starts January 1, and more than one-third of the members have not yet paid their dues. As you know, the Society is entirely dependent upon dues to cover its expenses. Our biggest expense is producing and mailing the Bulletin, which we are able to send only to members in good standing. So please -- don't put it off. Send your dues today before it slips your mind again.

Election of Officers. The election of officers never did get off the ground. Five or six members sent in nominations during the past three months. All of them suggested that I continue as Chairman and Alice continue as Treasurer. So -- by default of the membership, the organization will continue in the same informal manner it has from the beginning. After four years, we'd be happy to turn over the job to anyone willing to take it on. Let us hear your suggestions.

Mini-Convention. Yet another follow-up meeting prolonged the ripple effect of last summer's First National Convention. At its November 29 meeting, the Northwest Group received a detailed report about it from me, heard Bob Bishop read a long letter about it from Jim Flanagan and enjoyed the pictures Jim had sent.

Bob Bishop asked to be relieved of the chairmanship of the Northwest Group, which will continue for the present on an informal basis with the host for each meeting serving as temporary chairman.

Alice and I showed the group new additions to our collection that we had picked up recently in New Jersey. Discussions of lenses and the repair, storage and preservation of slides were followed by a hearty pot-luck lunch and some good informal visiting.

Encore. Several members of the Northwest Group have been back on the show circuit. Bob and Carm Bishop report excellent attendance at the shows they gave during Seattle's Encore Festival. They were also scheduled for a show for the Kitsap Historical Society in Bremerton, Washington, early this year. John Potter teamed up with another person to present old (magic lantern) and new slides of the Holy Land. Alice and I gave three shows for friends while we were back East and have given three since our return to the West coast -- one at a church, one at a senior citizen center and one at an historical society meeting.

Volunteers. I am happy to report that Louis and Carline Moran have offered to help with reproduction and mailing of the Bulletin. That will take a bog load off of Alice and me, and we appreciate it. We hope increasing numbers of you will respond to the continuing need for articles for the Bulletin. The more we share with each other, the more fun we will have.

NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE: THE EDITOR'S SCRAPBOOK

Bibliography of Magic Lantern Literature. Several of you have expressed interest in having the Society develop a bibliography of reference materials about magic lanterns and related topics. Bouquets go to two members, Bob Woodward and Steve Chamberlain, who have volunteered to undertake this project. We have appointed a four-person committee with Robert Woodward, 494 Cheyenne Lane, San Jose, California 95123, as chairman. The committee will need help from all of you to make this worthwhile effort a success. We will supply additional details as soon as the Committee decides how the task will be approached.

List of Slide Makers. Nancy Bergh reports her list is still under development but that she is "nearing the end of her resources" so we are not to despair. It will be typed and distributed some day. Be sure to send Nancy any information you have on slide makers.

British Lanternist. Jack Boucher reports that Roger Orme's long-postponed tour of parts of the U.S. may take place in the fall of '82. If you are interested in trying to schedule a show in your area, see p. 11 of your July 1980 Bulletin for details of how this can be arranged.

Proposed East Coast Meeting. Jim Flanagan has contacted members who live in the Eastern part of the country to explore their interest in meeting occasionally in the NYC area or his back yard ("the size of a

football field," he says) in N.J. Any of you who haven't responded, please do so. And of course Jim would welcome any of you from other parts of the country who cared to attend.

Archival Supplies. In response to requests at the National Convention, Nancy Bergh has sent the names of several archival supply houses. She asked us to note that these mentions do not constitute recommendations, as she has not had personal experience with all of them. She suggests you write for catalogues of the supplies they offer.

- TALAS, Division of Technical Library
  130 Fifth Avenue, NY, NY 10011
  British Museum leather treatment product available in bulk
  (enough to last a museum conservator 10 years or a lantern bellows conservator a lifetime!)

- The Hollinger Corporation
  P.O. Box 6185
  3810 South Four Mile Run Drive
  Arlington, Virginia 22206
  White, acid free binding tape

- Light Impressions Corporation
  P.O. Box 3012
  Rochester, NY 14614
  Slide tape/binding supplies

- University Products, Inc.
  P.O. Box 101
  South Canal Street
  Holyoke, Mass. 01041
  Slide tape/binding supplies

David and Barbara Henry provided another source:

- Brunnings, High Holburn, London, England
  Black binding tape

For the Person Who Has Everything Else. Margaret Bergh has passed along everybody's answer to what to give the person who has everything. It seems Northwest Microfilm, P.O. Box 29037, Minneapolis, Minn. 55429, is offering Microvision II, a hand-held, 12 oz. microfiche reader that "goes wherever you do for immediate information retrieval and display." It's less than 6" long. Just the thing for m.l. research if your library happens to have discarded all its books and put everything on micro-somethingorother.

Under the Tree. My family and I managed to have a few magic lantern-related items for each other under our Christmas tree this year -- such as a broadside for a magic lantern show (picked up at an antique show for #3) and 17 zoetrope strips ($4 the lot). See -- bargains are still to be found!

Kudos and Knocks for the Bulletin. Several of you have recently written to praise the quality of our Bulletin. These comments are much appreciated. It is a lot of work to put together, and it helps to have these efforts recognized.

Some of you have also inquired quietly why it comes out on such an irregular schedule. There are several reasons -- my own demanding and rather unpredictable work schedule, the difficulty of getting material from the members to meet a particular deadline, and the time-consuming process of having to send it clear across the country to be typed, reproduced and mailed.

The amount of correspondence the editorship requires also enters in. When I began to put this issue together, I had a three month stack of mail waiting to be answered, which required more than 20 letters of reply.

Another factor is the research I do for the articles I write for the Bulletin. For the one on Lewis Carroll, for example, I read seven biographies of Carroll, his Life and Letters, his Diaries, four of his books and six books of literary criticism and interpretation. Grand total: 19 books, of which 14 were read from cover to cover. When you are looking for something as specific as evidence of your subject's interest in a particular type of activity, this means combing your reference materials with a very fine-toothed comb.

Nor did it end there. Carroll's excitement over the illustion of Queen Catherine's dream set me looking for information on it. This resulted in the article on how such effects can be achieved, which, of course, required consulting an additional stack of books. On both of these topics, incidentally, I barely scratched the surface of the available materials. I drew only on books in my personal library, not on any of the rich resources of the Library of Congress or the public and university libraries of the Washington, D.C. area.

So please continue to be patient about lapses in publication dates of the Bulletin. You will get your four issues per year -- January, April, July and October -- even though they may be several weeks late appearing in your mailbox.

Items for the Bulletin. The increasing response from the members to our requests for articles, short info items and material for the Q&A column is gratifying. It shows that you really are interested in participating actively in the Society. If you'll read this issue carefully, you will see that it contains contributions from nearly a dozen of you. Thanks, and keep the flow coming.

I'd particularly like more personal experience type articles -- items about unusual lanterns, slides or other parts of your collection; information about how you got interested in magic lanterns or some particular aspect of the field; reminiscences about dealers or other interesting people you've met in the course of collecting; details about shows you've given. Each of you must surely have had at least one interesting experience as a result of this hobby. How about sharing it?

BUY/SELL/TRADE

Wanted: mechanical slides. Will buy singles or collections. Mail on approval with prices. Will send check or return material within 10 days. Also interested in biunials; send description and photo. Jim Flanagan, 245 Andover Rd., Box 431, Sparta, N.J. 07871